

May 23, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Special Group (CI) Meeting
2 p.m., Thursday, May 23, 1963

PRESENT: Governor Harriman, The Attorney General, Mr. Mc Cone, Mr.
Forrestal, Mr. Coffin vice Mr. Bell, Mr. Wilson vice Mr. Murrow,
Mr. Bundy vice Mr. Gilpatric, General Krulak vice General Taylor

25X1

☐ Mr. Poats were present for Item No. 2.

NSC REVIEW
COMPLETED,
6/26/2003

Mr. Martin, Mr. Koren and Mr. Heavner were present for Item 3.

Mr. Maechling was present for the meeting.

1. Special Report - Mr. Forrestal

Mr. Forrestal gave an oral report on this item. He stated that a written report would be prepared for the June 6 meeting.

2. Follow-up Report on Indonesia From May 16 Meeting

Mr. Coffin reviewed the major points contained in the AID report submitted for this item. He observed that the chronology of actions on the procurement of equipment, arms and ammunition for the Mobile Brigade indicated no unwarranted delays. He pointed out that it was not possible for the Public Safety Evaluation Team to commence its study prior to January 25, 1963, due to the situation in Indonesia. There also have been problems in getting our procurement orders promptly processed within the Indonesian Government.

Mr. Coffin, in commenting on actions taken to follow-up on Djakarta TOAID 1298, stated that AID/Washington consideration of the Country Team request for counterpart waiver in support of the civic action program did not delay this program in any way. The Country Team has been given authority to go ahead with this waiver although AID/Washington has suggested several alternative methods of handling this matter.

Mr. Coffin informed the Group that AID has agreed to fund the program to train ranking military officers who are now or will be assigned to Indonesian civilian ministries. The longer term training in U.S. universities of junior officers will be funded by MAP under the civic action project with AID providing support as required. Mr. Bundy commented that DOD has reserved 50 spaces for this program this year.

Mr. Coffin stated that all items procured from FY 1962 funds for the Thailand police have been delivered in Thailand.

Based on current information, delivery dates for vehicles and the first increment of arms for the Mobile Brigade can be met.

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Mr. Coffin described for the Group the special procurement follow-up system now in use by AID to monitor public safety and civic action projects. He pointed out that the Far East Region also monitors these actions on a monthly basis.

As to the adequacy of advisors assigned to the Mobile Brigade, Mr. Coffin stated that it is misleading to believe that only three advisors are available to work with the Mobile Brigade. Actually half of the 16 man mission will have Mobrig advisory duties at one time or another.

In response to Mr. Forrestal's question on the adequacy of AID's follow-up procedures on procurement actions, Mr. Coffin acknowledged that these procedures are new but that AID is actively examining what additional steps should be taken to improve follow-up procedures in Washington. For example, the Far East Region has designated a specific individual to monitor counterinsurgency programs.

The Attorney General, in commenting on the AID report, expressed his concern that not enough has been done to insure an aggressive follow-up system on procurement actions. He stated that for any system to be effective it must establish firm deadlines and identify those responsible individuals both in Washington and in the field. He also believes that follow-up systems should be established within AID for procurement actions other than counterinsurgency.

Following a discussion of this subject, the Group agreed to request Mr. Bell to give an oral report at a future meeting on what AID is doing to improve procedures in the field of procurement.

25X1 3. Discussion with Colonel [] on the Situation in Viet-Nam

25X1 [] to South Viet-Nam, stated that he believes we are winning the war in Viet-Nam, current statistical indicators reflect favorable trends, and the most significant development is the increase in volume of spontaneous intelligence provided by the people. This is because the Government is now providing them with security from the Viet Cong.

He pointed out that there are problems with the press in Viet-Nam but they are reporting what they see or are being told. He believes this situation can be improved by working more closely with them in the field. Our U.S. military advisors are reflecting in their comments to the press their frustrations to get the Vietnamese to accept their advice. The big success story in Viet-Nam is the strategic hamlet program and this story has not yet been fully told. He stated that out of a total population in Viet-Nam of about 16 million some 8 million have been moved into the strategic hamlets, resulting in one of the biggest population moves in history.

25X1 [] presented an oral and graphic description of the concept of the strategic hamlet program in the southern portion of Viet-Nam, stating that its objective is to establish strategic hamlets on a radial basis along communications routes with subsequent development of hamlets laterally to fill the gaps. The purpose is to separate the people from the insurgents.

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The radial development of the hamlets is progressing well but the lateral program is falling behind. He observed that we may be over-extending ourselves in the strategic hamlet program leaving a number of Viet Cong behind enabling them to penetrate areas already cleared. The strength of Vietnamese armed forces is being sapped to counter the threats of the Viet Cong in these pockets of resistance. He believes that unless we clear out these Viet Cong pockets we may provide the Viet Cong with an opportunity to concentrate against the over-extended Vietnamese armed forces.

25X1 [] commented that the concept for the strategic hamlet program in the high plateau area envisions groups of mutually supporting areas cleared of the Viet Cong. The strategic hamlets in this area are designed to restrict and inhibit Viet Cong movement while those in the south are designed to destroy the Viet Cong.

25X1 [] stated that he had discussed this problem with Diem and Diem recognizes the threat of the left-behind pockets of Viet Cong but he desires to extend the presence of his Government into outlying areas. Diem believes that to pursue this program effectively he may require additional resources from the U.S.

General Harkins, in discussing this matter with [] stated that he believed the Vietnamese units deployed to counter these left-behind Viet Cong are effectively utilized as they have been able to flush out and destroy the Viet Cong.

25X1 [] concluded by stating that our goal should be to get a higher percentage of the population into areas free from Viet Cong attack, concentrate on economic programs in this area, and then extend these "white areas" throughout the country.

4. Progress Report on the Internal Defense Plan for Colombia

This item was deferred for consideration at the next meeting.

Miscellaneous

A. The meeting of the Special Group scheduled for Tuesday, May 28, 1963, has been cancelled. The next meeting will be held on June 6.

[]
James W. Dingeman
Executive Secretary
Special Group (CI)

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